



LOSFA

2022

REFLECTIONS

As LOSFA embarks on the new year, we want to pause to celebrate and share highlights from our many successes this past year. In 2022, while the country slowly returned to pre-pandemic days, LOSFA successfully launched new programs, expanded support for Louisiana students and families, and promoted equity of college access through our student engagement, outreach, and communications efforts.

Looking ahead to the new year, LOSFA will continue to promote, prepare, and provide Louisiana students with essential resources, support, and student-centric services from birth through postsecondary completion.

We invite you to share in our celebration and wish you a Happy New Year!

AGENCY *highlights*

REFRESHING OUR BRAND

LOSFA launched its refreshed branding through the efforts of CASC Director of Collegiate and Community Outreach Shayne Creppel and the agency graphics team. The branding refresh effort focused on updating logos, fonts, and colors for the agency and Louisiana's 529 Saving Programs. The revised branding was designed to elevate the agency and saving programs' identities through a contemporary and vibrant style, improve readability through an updated and modern font, and provide better consistency in design for graphics, resources, materials, and other elements.



FOCUS GROUPS

Through the collaborative work of LOSFA and Vela Institute, ten focus groups were conducted among four populations (high school students, college students, parents, and teachers) to gain a greater understanding of how LOSFA and other state education partners can better support students and families through equity of college access. More than 400 surveys were received from respondents to supplement the focus group sessions, with the results presented to stakeholders in October. Utilizing the survey results, LOSFA started amplifying and expanding our programs to better promote, provide for, and prepare students for college and careers.



211 DATABASE

On July 1, 2022 the Louisiana Board of Regents became the 4th state agency to procure a user license with the Louisiana 211 statewide database. With linked access through LOSFA's website, which hosts the only public-facing 211 search engine, students can discover wraparound services to support their educational attainment.



SHENELL LIVOUS MEMORIAL BOOK SCHOLARSHIP

In memory of LOSFA Accountant Shenell Livous, who passed away on August 15, 2022, LOSFA established a one-time book scholarship. The scholarship was awarded on November 21, 2022, to Tina Alderson during the monthly Virtual Accounting/Finance Student Network Group meeting. Mrs. Alderson attends Northwestern State University of Louisiana, where she is pursuing a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) certification.



VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

The M.J. Foster Promise Program was added to the list of Virtual Office Hours sessions being offered by LOSFA.

In 2022, LOSFA conducted a total of **452 Virtual Office Hour** sessions:

TOPS Retention	195
TOPS Initial Eligibility	123
Student Hub	52
M.J. Foster	45
Counselor	4
FAFSA Completion	33

LEX

In 2021, LOSFA introduced its chatbot, LEX. This year, LEX went live with its agent handoff feature at the end of July. Inquiries outside LEX's scope of knowledge can now be handed off to a LOSFA representative for real-time, immediate handling. LEX can be found on our website at www.mylosfa.la.gov. LEX answered **7,555** questions this year and handed off 166 conversations to a live LOSFA agent.

529 SAVING PLAN

In May, LOSFA celebrated National 529 Day by holding a month-long campaign to increase awareness about the benefits of saving early for a child's college education. The campaign included an at-home scavenger hunt, drawing competition, video submission, and a Twitter/Instagram poll. Participants had their names entered into a drawing for a prize of \$29 deposited into their START account. There was also a drawing for a grand prize winner, who received a \$529 deposit into the 529 savings account of their choice.

NATIONAL COLLEGE FAIR

LOSFA attended the 2022 Baton Rouge National College Fair hosted by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). LOSFA staff was available in the Counseling Center to assist and advise students, with another staff member located upstairs to facilitate TOPS workshops.



SCHOLARSHIPS *and programs*



M.J. FOSTER PROMISE PROGRAM

The M.J. Foster Promise Program, administered by the Board of Regents (BOR) through the LOSFA launched on July 1, 2022. Named after former Louisiana Governor Mike J. Foster, the M.J. Foster Promise Program provides financial support for students ages 21 and older, to earn credentials that align with high-demand jobs in Louisiana's growing industry sectors.

GEAUX TEACH

LOSFA launched the Louisiana Geaux Teach Program during Fall 2022, which provides scholarships to students enrolled in BESE approved teacher preparation programs or alternate certification programs at postsecondary institutions within the state. Each institution determines its own selection criteria for Geaux Teach scholarship recipients. LOSFA provided outreach to participating postsecondary institutions, including webinars and resource guides.



*The Geaux Teach Scholarship Program is not affiliated with any "Geaux Teach" or "Go Teach Project" degree programs administered by postsecondary institutions.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE LOUISIANA CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (LCTF)

LOSFA participated in the Back to School Community Fair in Natchitoches, hosted by the Office of the Governor and the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund (LCTF). The event featured food, activities, entertainment, a browse of state and community agencies and organizations, and free school supplies.

NATIONAL HOMESCHOOL HONOR SOCIETY

The Tau Lambda Chapter of Eta Sigma Alpha, the National Homeschool Honor Society, invited LOSFA to speak with their students and parents. Eta Sigma Alpha was founded in 1999 and is the first honor society established exclusively for homeschooled students in grades 9-12. LOSFA staff attended the meeting to provide information regarding the TOPS application process for homeschooled students. LOSFA continues to expand its outreach to homeschool groups by establishing connections with new groups.

FAFSA *highlights*



LOUISIANA RANKED #1 IN FAFSA COMPLETION FOR THE 2ND YEAR IN A ROW

As a trailblazer in FAFSA completions, LOSFA successfully launched its annual FAFSA Now campaign for 2022. As a result of the dedication of our outreach and advising teams and through partnerships with our school systems and counselors, Louisiana was ranked first in FAFSA completions for the second year in a row. The FAFSA Now campaign encourages students to complete the FAFSA by February 1st to meet deadlines for first-come-first served aid, minimize "summer melt", and expand options for financial assistance.

At the beginning of June, Louisiana was #2 in FAFSA Completions, while Tennessee ranked #1. In response, LOSFA launched a Virtual FAFSA Marathon in the last two weeks of June to close the 0.4% gap between Louisiana and Tennessee. The campaign encouraged high school seniors to take advantage of existing LOSFA resources (virtual office hours, GeauxFAFSA@la.gov) to get assistance with completing their FAFSA. Additionally, virtual office hour sessions were offered after hours to create more opportunities to provide service.

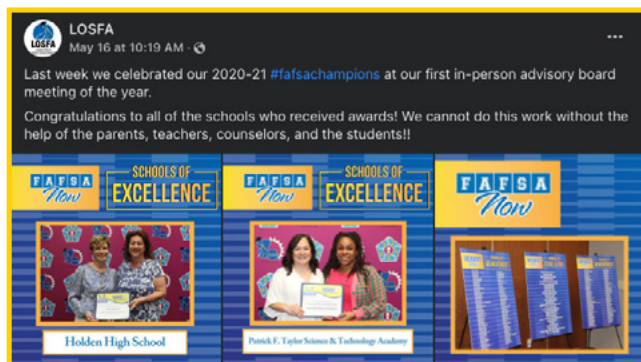
FAFSA RENEWAL CAMPAIGN

LOSFA promoted FAFSA renewal among returning college students and shared graphics on their social media platforms to help promote Federal Student Aid's (FSA) 2022-23 FAFSA Spring Renewal Campaign. FSA sent emails and text messages to parents and students that had not yet submitted a 2022-23 FAFSA.



2021-22 SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE RECOGNITION

Representatives from Schools of Excellence for the 2021-22 FAFSA cycle year attended a LOSFA Advisory Board meeting, where they were recognized for their FAFSA completion efforts. Schools of Excellence are those schools that achieved a 100% completion rate for the previous academic year.



DISTRICT WIDE FAFSA NIGHT

Several members of LOSFA facilitated FAFSA completion events during the district-wide **FAFSA Night**, hosted by the East Baton Rouge Parish School System.



STUDENT engagement and outreach activities

TRANSITION STUDENT NETWORK GROUP (SNG)

LOSFA launched the Transition SNG for 9th-12th grade students to connect them with career professionals and other high school students who aspire to attend college. The Transition SNG also provides encouragement, resources, and social and emotional support for these students as they transition from high school to college.





REVFIT GYM'S YOUTH ENRICHMENT HUDDLE
UNLOCK MY FUTURE

Student Engagement will promote and provide college access information with the students of RevFit Gym's Youth Enrichment Huddle. The event will include extensive dialogue regarding college preparation and funding.

www.unlockmyfuture.org

Scan the QR Code to join!

THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2022 AT 4:30 P.M.



REGISTER NOW
 for our
2022 VIRTUAL APPRENTICESHIP FAIR
 FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Hosted by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance
 Field Outreach Services and Student Engagement Divisions

NOVEMBER 16
 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
 via Zoom

At this event, participants will receive information on apprenticeship programs, their processes, benefits, and outcomes. Through a series of interactive presentations from industry professionals and state and national workforce development administrators, students will:

- 1 Discover an alternative pathway to high-paying and high-demand jobs
- 2 Gain knowledge of soft skills necessary for workforce success
- 3 Learn about Louisiana companies' apprenticeship opportunities
- 4 Interact and connect with state-wide professionals and organizations

If you have any questions or need technical assistance, please contact:
 Bruce Craig at Bruce.Craig@la.gov or Danita Brown at Danita.Brown2@la.gov



YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Grade: First-year freshman
 School: New Iberia Senior High School
 GPA: 3.8
 Anticipated Major: Marine Biology
 Anticipated University: Louisiana State University

Other Accolades/Interests: Enjoys the outdoors, traveling, trying new things, and spending time with friends and family.

JORDAN LEBLANC

"GEAR UP has given me the tools needed for me to be successful in my future education and career."

REVFIT

The Student Engagement division conducted several community-based presentations to the RevFit Gym in Lafayette and Baton Rouge. LOSFA Student Engagement Specialist Marsha Beardon attended their Youth Empowerment Huddle, which included RevFit's 2022 high school graduates, current seniors, and college freshmen, to provide resources and information for transitioning into their post-secondary experiences. Additionally, attendees were onboarded into one of LOSFA's existing Accounting/Finance, Engineering, IT/CIS, or Nursing SNGs. Graduating high school seniors were provided information for college access, success, and completion. LOSFA's Student Engagement Intern, Khadija Kamara, provided a testimonial of her college experience and answered questions students had regarding college preparation. The session discussed study skills, time management strategies, and college and career match using LOSFA's 5-Point Match and Unlock My Future resource tool.

VIRTUAL APPRENTICESHIP FAIR

LOSFA's Student Engagement and Field Outreach Services divisions collaborated to virtually deliver the 2022 Apprenticeship Fair. Secretary Ava Cates with the Louisiana Workforce Commission welcomed attendees from 10 high schools. There were a total of 549 people registered for the event. Also in attendance were speakers representing the U.S. Department of Labor and various job sectors including construction, manufacturing, IT, and healthcare.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT: STUDENT PROFILES

Louisiana GEAR UP sent seven students to Washington, DC for the Youth Leadership Summit (YLS) this year, and presented their experiences during the August LOSFA Advisory Board meeting. The YSL, through the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), provided a high-quality, national-level interactive training experience and peer-to-peer learning opportunity focused on life, leadership and learning-to-learn skills for 9th-12th grade high school students who are currently participating in GEAR UP programs.

SPRING F.L.Y. TOUR

LOSFA presented the Spring 2022 “Financial Literacy for You” Tour. Public Relations Specialist Brian Cook made his debut as the new Junior Advocate. The F.L.Y. Tour held its first in-person event since 2020 at McNeese State University’s Preview Day. Students and parents learned about financial literacy and college access through interactive games. Then, the F.L.Y. Tour was held virtually over three separate days. Students from across the state enjoyed an online streaming experience and interactive activities. Postsecondary institutions also participated by presenting and answering students’ questions.



BOOTCAMP

LOSFA/Louisiana GEAR UP contracted with MasteryPrep to provide free ACT Prep Saturday Boot Camps to LFOS/Louisiana GEAR UP 10th-12th grade students. Students learned how to read ACT scores and improve pacing and time management. They also learned effective test-taking strategies.

LOUISIANA COLLEGE APPLICATION AND ACCESS MONTH (LCAAM)

October was proclaimed Louisiana College Application and Access Month, and LOSFA continues assisting high school seniors with the college application process.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE STUDENT GRANT AND AID PROGRAMS (NASSGAP)

LOSFA staff facilitated the discussion during the NASSGAP Power Hour in February. Representatives from Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi discussed their states' strategies regarding initial FAFSA filing and the impact of FAFSA mandates. Deborah Paul, director of Scholarships & Grants, serves as Member-at-Large on the leadership team of NASSGAP.

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE REGISTRARS AND ADMISSIONS OFFICERS (LACRAO)

The division of College Access, Success, and Communications represented LOSFA during the 2022 LACRAO Articulation workshops. Six workshops are held each year across the state to provide important information to high school counselors regarding TOPS, FAFSA, the ACT, and updates from their LACRAO Zone Coordinators.

CONFERENCES *and presentations*

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY GROUP

Ebony Holmes (CASC Director of Public Information and Advising) was tapped to lead the work of the College Affordability Workgroup for the Student Success Council (SSC) alongside Elizabeth Bentley-Smith (Board of Regents). The SSC is charged with identifying trends, obstacles, and solutions to inform policies and practices targeting the state's attainment goals. The goals of the College Affordability Workgroup are to develop a set of financial literacy concepts for a statewide training plan and to conduct a dual enrollment finance study.

2022 JUMPSTART CONVENTION

LOSFA presented at the 2022 Jump Start Convention hosted by the Office of Career and College Readiness with the Louisiana Department of Education. LOSFA representatives facilitated a session titled "Funding Opportunities for Post-Secondary Career Training," where they discussed the M.J. Foster Promise Program, TOPS Tech, and how LOSFA supports and engages Louisiana students. The audience consisted of CTE professionals, school administrators, and high school counselors.



2022 LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (LCTCS) ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Ebony Holmes, Director of Public Information and Advising, and LaVonya Malveaux, Director of Student Engagement, teamed up to present at the 2022 LCTCS Conference. The session was called "Engaged to Attain" and was selected as a hybrid course offering both a virtual and in-person setting. Kayla Gros, LCAAM State Coordinator, also facilitated the session, "Applications, Admissions, and Assistance: Promoting College Access through Community Partnerships."

NCAN CONFERENCE

Several LOSFA team members attended the 2022 NCAN Conference in Atlanta, GA, in September. In recognition of Atlanta's leadership in the civil rights movement, this year's conference theme was "Advancing the Right to Postsecondary Attainment."

Dr. Boutte, who also serves on the NCAN Board of Directors, delivered a speech during the Federal Student Aid Plenary session, where she introduced the COO of Federal Student Aid, Richard Cordray. Ebony Holmes and LaVonya Malveaux presented to a packed house during their session, "Engagement Strategies in a Post-Pandemic Era."



LDOE FALL COUNSELOR INSTITUTES

LOSFA was invited to participate in the Louisiana Department of Education's (LDOE) Fall Counselor's Institutes. These regional Institutes were hosted by LDOE's Office of Career and College Readiness and served as an opportunity for school counselors across the state to interact with LDOE and LOSFA and network with their peers. LOSFA shared agency updates and information about Geaux Teach and the new Transition Student Network groups.

GULF-SOUTH SUMMIT

Kayla Gros was a panelist during the 2022 Gulf-South Summit for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education. The panel session, "Applications, Admissions and Assistance: Promoting College Access through Service-Learning," highlighted the graduate-level service-learning course, College Access and Choice, at Louisiana State University. Partners of the service-learning course included LOSFA (LCAAM), Baton Rouge Youth Coalition (BRYC), and Trio Upward Bound.



COWEN INSTITUTE 2022 POSTSECONDARY CONVENING

LOSFA was invited to present at the Cowen Institute 2022 Postsecondary Convening: Life After High School. SE Director LaVonya Malveaux and CASC Director of Public Information and Advising Ebony Holmes facilitated a session at the event. Lisa S. Vosper, Ph.D., Associate Commissioner for Workforce Education and Training (Louisiana Board of Regents), was the Plenary Speaker.

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (LASAP)

LOSFA staff presented at the LASAP 50th Annual State Conference in Lafayette, Louisiana. LASAP is a non-profit state association whose mission is to promote the development, improvement, and extension of educational opportunities to Louisiana students. LASAP's membership consists of professionals that work within the Federal TRIO Programs to facilitate successful matriculation from high school into postsecondary education.

LOSFA COUNSELOR TRAINING SERIES

LOSFA hosted its two annual counselor training series this year. The Professional School Counselor webinar series was held in September and offered a comprehensive overview of TOPS, LCAAM, the Student Hub, and the FAFSA. The TOPS Processing Webinar series was held in March and covered the TOPS processing cycle and common issues.

NCAN CERTIFIED ADVISOR TRAINING

Several LOSFA staff members completed the 22 courses needed to earn the 2022-23 NCAN Certified Advisor Badge, demonstrating their knowledge in college attainment advising skills.

2022 FALL WEBINAR SERIES: THE FORMULA FOR FAFSA OVERVIEW

College access professionals learned how to increase FAFSA completion rates from leading states and Ohio communities. Dr. Cobb, Louisiana GEAR Up and Field Outreach Services Director, shared the strategies that helped Louisiana become #1 in FAFSA completions.

LOUISIANA WORKERS' COMPENSATION CORPORATION (LWCC)

Louisiana Workers' Compensation Corporation (LWCC) invited LOSFA to speak with their employees about Louisiana's Savings Programs (START, START K12, ABLE).



PARTNERSHIPS

GIRL SCOUTS

LOSFA staff met with representatives of Girl Scouts Louisiana East to form a partnership for LOSFA to provide educational programming to members and parents on financial literacy and college access and readiness.



GARDERE INITIATIVE

LOSFA's Student Engagement division launched its partnership with a community-based organization seeking to provide college access information to its program participants. LOSFA staff provided a series of presentations to the Baton Rouge-based Gardere Initiative through its "LYFE" (Louisiana Youth For Excellence) events.



STEM PATHFINDER PROGRAM

LOSFA partnered with Ochsner Health to promote the STEM Pathfinder Program. The STEM Pathfinder Program was a summer program for local high school students in Orleans, East Baton Rouge, and Caddo parishes that encouraged entry into the health sciences workforce pipeline and prepared students to make intentional career decisions.

Ochsner Health

STEM PATHFINDER PROGRAM

STEM Pathfinder is a **cost-free** program that will encourage entry into the health sciences workforce pipeline by introducing local high school students in the **Orleans, EBR, and Caddo Parishes** to a wide range of career paths. Throughout the program, Ochsner healthcare professionals from across many disciplines will provide mentorship to students, preparing them to make intentional career decisions.

After attending the 2021 STEM Pathfinder Program:

- 92%** of students felt **MORE** confident in their ability to become a healthcare professional.
- 96%** of students were **MORE** interested in pursuing a healthcare career.
- 96%** of students felt **MORE** empowered to find out more information about becoming a healthcare professional.

APPLICATION DEADLINE THURSDAY, MARCH 31

UPROMISE PARTNERSHIP

LOSFA's START Saving Program continued its ongoing partnership with Upromise. Upromise offers a free reward program to help families save for college by collaborating with major retailers, restaurants, and other brands to give members cash-back rewards on their purchases. START account owners have had a great year receiving free cash back rewards by linking their UPromise accounts to their START accounts. To date, START Saving plans have received \$58,122 in cash-back rewards for 2022.



LHC GROUP

The Division of Student Engagement led efforts to establish a partnership with multi-state Louisiana-based healthcare employer LHC Group in June of 2021. The partnership was expanded in 2022 to include providing internship opportunities to students participating in Student Network Groups, connecting students to full-time employment



upon degree completion, sponsorship of the Student Network Group Completion Celebration, and developing plans for K-12 outreach efforts.

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVES (LACCE)

LOSFA hosted a webinar on the M.J. Foster Promise Program for members of the Louisiana Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (LACCE). Promotional materials for the program were also shared with all 60 LACCE members to promote the scholarship to Louisiana residents and eligible business and industry partners.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

LOSFA partnered with the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to promote a scholarship opportunity provided by their office. The scholarship criteria was based on heritage from one of several Louisiana Tribes and financial need.



MEDIA *Mentions*

HARVARD STUDENT INTERVIEWS LOSFA DIRECTORS

Several LOSFA staff members met with Salman Khan, a Harvard Ph.D. student writing a paper on the effects of the FAFSA mandate. Team members fielded questions from Mr. Khan on FAFSA outreach efforts in Louisiana and how outreach efforts evolved after the implementation of the mandate.

HECHINGER REPORT

In February, several LOSFA directors spoke with the Hechinger Report on how Louisiana ranks as one of the top states with the highest FAFSA completion rates. They also expressed how vital LOSFA's efforts to train staff and support school counselors were to return Louisiana's FAFSA completion to pre-pandemic ranks.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOSFA staff was interviewed by Adrienne Lu, a reporter with The Chronicle of Higher Education, to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 on FAFSA completion rates and what lessons Louisiana learned as the first state to implement a FAFSA mandate.

FOX 8 MORNING SHOW

Ebony Holmes - College Access, Success and Communications (CASC) Director of Public Information and Advising, appeared on the FOX 8 Morning Show to discuss the M.J. Foster Promise Program.



BR PROUD

Shayne Creppel, CASC Director of Collegiate and Community Outreach, provided an interview to BR Proud to promote the M.J. Foster Promise Program and how to apply.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBANY

LOSFA staff was interviewed by Tzuhao "Howard" Chen to discuss the chatbot implementation process. Howard, a doctoral student at the University of Albany, was conducting interviews to explore the adoption of chatbots by state agencies. LOSFA's team will have the opportunity to attend Howard's virtual presentation of his findings once his research is complete.